THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) to (c) The Commerce Secretaries of India and Bangladesh met at Dhaka on April 8—10, 2002 to review issues relating to bilateral trade including improvement in the provisions of the India-Bangladesh Bilateral Trade Agreement. The validity of the Trade Agreement has been extended beyond April, 2002 before the meeting at Dhaka.

(d) The measures considered at the above said meeting for smooth flow of trade between India and Bangladesh would help enhanced exchange of trade between the two countries.

Agreement with Russia

4984. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a delegation of Russia visited India in the 1st week of February, 2002;

(b) if so, what subjects of mutual interest were discussed with them;

(c) the agreements reached during the visit and other details in this regard; and

(d) the assistance expected therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) Yes, Sir. A delegation led by the Deputy Chairman (Deputy Prime Minister) of the Government of the Russian Federation Mr. Ilya Klebanov visited India from 5—8 February, 2002.

(b) to (d) During the visit of Mr. Ilya Klebanov, the Eighth Session of the Indo-Russian Inter- Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC) was held, at the end of which a Protocol was signed. The Protocol reflects the discussions held on various issues of bilateral interest with a view to enhancing co-operation in trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural spheres. It was, *inter alia*, agreed that both sides should actively promote and further facilitate increased as well as direct interface between Indian and Russian entrepreneurs which would lead to a better understanding of economic and commercial opportunities for doing business in the two countries. It was decided to encourage direct business to business contract through exchange of delegations, Joint Business Councils, holding of exhibitions, participation in fairs etc.